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Current Class: [REDACTED]
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Document Number: 1980BUENOS00102

Page: 1

Channel: n/a

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 00102 01 OF 02 042008Z
ACTION ARA-15

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3672
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
MAMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 536
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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DECONTROL

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

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[REDACTED] SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 0102

USEEC
ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE
E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - DECEMBER 29-JANUARY 4, 1980
REF: BUENOS AIRES 10446

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTRY WORKING GROUPS HAVE BEGUN
STUDYING THE IAHRC REPORT AND REASSESSING ARGENTINA'S
RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BUENOS 00102 01 OF 02 042008Z

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. POLICE BROKE UP AN UNAUTHORIZED
CEREMONY BY THE MOTHERS. THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY, THE
LEAGUE FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN, AND THE ECUMENICAL
MOVEMENT ISSUED A JOINT STATEMENT. THE PAPAL NUNCIO
ALSO SPOKE OUT PUBLICLY ON THE ISSUE OF "EXCESSES."

Current Class: [REDACTED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 1

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1980BUENOS00102

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 2
Channel: n/a

A JUDGE WHOSE PREVIOUS CLAIM TO FAME WAS ORDERING THE SEPTEMBER RAIDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS HAS NOW ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION OF DISAPPEARANCES.
END SUMMARY.

1. MONTHERS' MARCH ----

ON DECEMBER 28 THE "MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO" AND OTHER RELATIVES OF DISAPPEARED WERE PREVENTED FROM LAYING FLOWERS AT THE SAN MARTIN MONUMENT BY POLICE. A GROUP OF ABOUT 200 PEOPLE WHO MET AT THE MONUMENT WERE ASKED TO LEAVE OR RISK ARREST. THE GROUP THEN BEGAN A MARCH ALONG THE STREETS OF DOWNTOWN BUENOS AIRES, WHICH WERE JMA PACKED WITH HOLIDAY CROWDS, AND EVENTUALLY WERE DISPERSED BY POLICE. NO ARRESTS REPORTED.

2. PETITION ----

THE DECEMBER 30 ISSUE OF "CLARIN" PUBLISHED A PETITION SIGNED BY THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, THE ARGENTINE LEAGUE FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT. THIS JOINT APPEAL CARRIED 174 SIGNATURES OF PROMINENT ARGENTINES, INCLUDING BISHOPS, PLITICIANS AND ALWYERS. THE PETITION CALLED FOR A REPEAL OF THE PRESUMPTIVE DEATH LAW (LAW NO. 22,068) PASSED LAST SEPTEMBER; CALLS ON THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO FULFILL ITS OBLIGATION

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 00102 01 OF 02 042008Z

TO PRODUCE OR ACCOUNT FOR THE DISAPPEARED; ASKS FOR THE REPEAL OF DECREE 780/79, WHICH IT SAYS GIVES AUTHORITY FOR THE DETENTION OF INDIVIDUALS DETERMINED UNILATERALLY BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO BE "TERRORIST DELINQUENTS" IN A WAY WHICH IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE PEN AUTHORITY GRANTED BY THE CONSTITUTION (AND WHICH, IT SAYS, PERMITS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO MAINTAIN INACCURATELY THAT THERE ARE NO "POLITICAL PRISONERS" IN ARGENTINA); AND CALLS FOR THE TRIAL OR RELEASE OF ALL DETAINEES CURRENTLY BEING HELD WITHOUT CHARGES. THE PETITION ALSO QUOTES PARTS OF THE POPE'S OCTOBER SPEECH WITH RESPECT TO ARGENTINA AND CHILE. (SEE 1979 BUENOS AIRES 4230 FOR A REPORT ON DECREE 780.)

3. COURT ORDERED PROBE ----

Current Class: [REDACTED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 2

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1980BUENOS00102

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 3
Channel: n/a

FEDERAL JUDGE MARTIN ANZOATEGUI HAS ORDERED A CRIMINAL COURT INVESTIGATION OF THE DISAPPEARANCES WHICH HAVE BEEN DENOUNCED BY ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS OVER THE YEARS. WHEN MAKING THIS RULING, ANZOATEGUI QUALIFIED SOME OF THE DISAPPEARED AS BEING LEGALLY DETAINED, HELD UNDER PEN, KILLED, OR HIDING OUTSIDE OF ARGENTINA, WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THIS IS THE CONCLUSION HE HOPES THE INVESTIGATION WILL REACH. HOWEVER, THIS MAY BE TOO PREMATURE A JUDGMENT AND HE WILL RESERVE COMMENT UNTIL THE RESULTS ARE IN. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT ANZOATEGUI IS THE JUDGE WHO ORDERED THE RAIDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS LAST SEPTEMBER. HE HAS ALSO CALLED FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ORIGINS OF FUNDS USED BY HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS FOR "PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS."

. BETTER PRISON CONDITIONS ----

RELATIVES OF PEN PRISONERS HELD AT RAWSON PRISON
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AGE 04 BUENOS 00102 01 OF 02 042008Z

AVE PETITIONED AUTHORITIES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS AT THE JAIL. THEY ASKED FOR IMPROVED TREATMENT OF PRISONERS, LESS CENSORSHIP OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES SENT TO PRISONERS, MORE EXERCISE, AND THAT CHILDREN OF INMATES BE ALLOWED TO VISIT. THEY ALSO COMPLAINED ABOUT THE FOOD SERVED TO INMATES AND SAID THAT THE PRISONERS WERE FREQUENTLY BEATEN BY PRISON GUARDS. ALSO MENTIONED WAS THAT RELATIVES WHO ATTENDED A MASS HELD AT THE DON BOSCO CHURCH IN RAWSON HAD BEEN HARRASSED.
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AGE 01 BUENOS 00102 02 OF 02 041956Z
ACTION ARA-15

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Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 3

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1980BUENOS00102

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 4
Channel: n/a

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[REDACTED] SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 0102

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ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

1. OAS HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT -----

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE "SOMOS", REGURGITATING SIMILAR
INFORMATION APPEARING EARLIER IN THE LOCAL PRESS,
CARRIED A JUMBLED STORY (DECEMBER 28) ON THE "VERY
HARD" IAHRC REPORT ON ARGENTINA. THE COHA PRESS
RELEASE OF DECEMBER 13, INTERNAL POLITICS WITHIN
THE IAHRC AND ALLEGED IAHRC CONNECTIONS WITH THE
MSG. A MAJOR IMPLICATION OF THE ARTICLE, WITHOUT

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PAGE 02 BUENOS 00102 02 OF 02 041956Z

ACTUALLY SAYING SO, WAS THAT TOM FARER, THE U.S.
MEMBER OF THE IAHRC, HAD HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH
THE ALLEGED "LEAKING" OF THE IAHRC REPORT TO COHA.
THE NOTION THAT FARER WAS SOMEHOW BEHIND THE COHA
PRESS RELEASE HAS BEEN WIDELY HELD HERE.
HOWEVER, ON HIS ARRIVAL IN ARGENTINA JANUARY 3 TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE DRAFTING OF THE GOA'S REPLY
TO THE OAS HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT (SEE BELOW), AMBASSADOR
GO THE OAS RAUL QUIJANO TOLD THE PRESS THAT THERE WAS
NO FIRM EVIDENCE THAT THE OAS REPORT HAD EVER
"LEAKED". SAID QUIJANO: THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S
STATEMENT OF DECEMBER 14, EMITTED IN RESPONSE TO
PRESS REPORTS OF A DECLARATION BY COHA, WAS INTENDED
SOLELY AS A WARNING THAT THE GOA WOULD FIND IT
UNACCEPTABLE IF THERE WERE AN ATTEMPT TO USE THE
OAS REPORT POLITICALLY.

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 4

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1980BUENOS00102

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 5
Channel: n/a

. FOREIGN MINISTRY MEETINGS ----

THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCED THAT A SPECIAL COMMISSION HAD BEEN SET UP WITHIN THE MINISTRY TO STUDY THE IAHRC REPORT AND PREPARE GOA'S REPLY. THE MINISTRY INFORMALLY INDICATED TO THE PRESS THAT THE REPORT WAS EXCESSIVELY HARD AND UNFAIR. PUBLICITY WAS ALSO GIVEN TO A SERIES OF MEETINGS THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HELD IN DECEMBER WITH ITS AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES D'AFFAIRES IN WESTERN EUROPE SPECIALLY CALLED BACK TO REVIEW ARGENTINE RELATIONS WITH THOSE COUNTRIES. THE MESSAGE EMANATING FROM THE MEETINGS WHICH THE FOREIGN OFFICE WANTED PUBLICIZED WAS THAT ARGENTINA CANNOT MAKE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN "ECONOMIC FRIENDS AND POLITICAL FRIENDS," WHICH TRANSLATED MEANS WESTERN EUROPE SHOULD NOT

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AGE 03 BUENOS 00102 02 OF 02 041956Z

ENTERTAIN HOPES OF PROFITABLE ECONOMIC TRANSACTIONS WITH ARGENTINA IF THE EUROPEANS CONTINUE TO TREAT ARGENTINA HOSTILELY ON THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

. BITTEL ----

CTING PERONIST PRESIDENT DEOLINDO BITTEL WAS CLEARED OF CHARGES OF "LACKING RESPECT FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS," WHICH STEM FROM HIS STATEMENT DENOUNCING THE STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA PUBLISHED DURING THE IAHRC'S VISIT HERE LAST SEPTEMBER. THE FEDERAL JUDGE WHO CLEARED BITTEL (ON THE GROUNDS THAT NO PARTICULAR GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HAD BEEN SINGLED OUT IN THE STATEMENT), TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY NEVERTHELESS TO CHASTISE PERON FOR ENCOURAGING AND GENERATING TERRORIST ACTS DURING HIS LIFETIME.

. PAPAL NUNCIO'S STATEMENT ----

MONSIGNOR PIO LAGHI TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE POPE'S PUBLIC REFERENCES TO ARGENTINA IN OCTOBER "MAY HAVE HURT A LITTLE, BUT THE POPE'S WORDS ARE A LIGHT WHICH SHOULD PENETRATE OUR CONSCIENCE AND MAKE US REFLECT." "VIOLENCE," SAID PIO LAGHI, "HAS BEEN ENGENDERED BY BOTH SIDES -- THOSE WHO "WANTED TO CARRY OUT A SPECIFIC PROCESS" AND THOSE "MOTIVATED BY DEFENSE, OR SELF-DEFENSE." THE NUNCIO'S ATTEMPT TO BE EVEN-HANDED, REFERRING BLANDLY TO LEFTIST

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 5

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1980BUENOS00102

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 6

Channel: n/a

TERRORISM AS A "SPECIFIC PROCESS" WILL NOT GO DOWN
WELL WITH THE MILITARY.
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Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 6

UNCLASSIFIED